

DISCIPLESHIP DURING THE WEEK

These "Sermon Discussion Questions" are designed for study during the week for believers in a wide variety of ages & stages in their walk with Christ.

1. There is a feature on some phones called "Focus." When set up, this option gives the user the ability to create quiet times when they don't receive calls or messages except from pre-determined people. If you were to set up the "Focus" feature on your phone, who would you want to be able to have access to you at all times? How is access to God utterly different than access settings on a cell phone?

2. Read Hebrews 9: 2-12. To what regulations for worship and place of holiness is the writer referring? Refer to the historical context. What did access to God look like for the priests who served in the old covenant? Describe the circumstances of their access to God. How has access to God changed through Christ? How is Christ's sacrifice different than the sacrifices of the priests? How does this impact our relationship with God? What did Christ's blood secure for us which the blood of goats & calves could not?

3. What words mean the same thing as "defile"? In what two places in 9:1-14 are there references to sin? What are the two categories of sin which the passage addresses? How common is it in even the closest Christian relationship to discuss sin? Where are the places Christians share their sin struggles? How can the Gospel reframe how we think and talk about sin? How can we live differently in light of this?

4. Read Hebrews 9:14. The words "purify" and "serve" are aspects of God's grace which are God's moderating grace and God's motivating grace. What are the distinctives of each aspect of grace? What does God's moderating grace accomplish for the Christian? How then can we look at a present sin struggle? How does God's motivating grace compel and propel us? What are the implications of the truth of motivating grace for apathy in the Christian life (refer to the quotation by David Murray)?

Praise to Jesus - Praise God for providing you with moment-to-moment access to him. Praise Jesus for his once and final sacrifice. Praise God for the reality that we can share openly and unashamedly our sin struggles. Praise God for a church which is committed to declaring the greatness of the Gospel and the reality that this leads us to holiness.

Repentance through Jesus - Repent of times that you have disregarded Christ's sacrifice by using grace as an opportunity to justify sin. Repent of the times you have thought that the only sin which needed God's forgiveness was the sin that you committed in a particular moment. Repent of any apathy in your Christian life.

Consecration for Jesus - Consecrate yourself to embrace God's moderating and motivating grace. Look to Jesus to cover sin and to confront it. Consecrate for Jesus yourself to lead in love and authenticity in your Christian relationships by being open and honest about sin.

Without motivating grace, we just rest in Christ. Without moderating grace, we just run and run – until we run out. We need the first grace to fire us up when we're dangerously cold; we need the second to cool us down when we're dangerously hot. The first gets us out of bed; the second get us to bed on time. The first recognizes Christ's fair demands upon us; the second receives Christ's full provision for us. The first says, 'Present your bodies as a living sacrifice;' the second says, 'Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit.' The first overcomes the resistance of our 'flesh;' the second respects the limitations of our humanity. The first speeds us up; the second slows us down. The first says, 'My son, give me your hands;' the second says, 'My son, give me your heart.'

- David Murray

“Pastoral discipleship from the pulpit for you through the week.
Each of our pastors has designed content with you in mind.”

FOR FAMILIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN

If you want to connect with our family ministries, contact Pastor Ken (kenc@fpcrome.org)

1. This passage continues to compare Jesus as the Great High Priest with High Priests of the old covenant. Verses 1-10 deal with the old covenant regulations for worship and for the sacrifices for sin.

- a. Hebrews 9:1 calls the earthly tabernacle or temple “an earthly place of holiness”. Ask your children what holiness means. Ask them what the connection between holiness and our need for forgiveness is.
- b. Hebrews 9:5 mentions the “mercy seat”. Ask your children if they know what mercy is. If you have older children, then ask them if we deserve mercy from God.
- c. Hebrews 9: 3 and 9:7 mention “the second curtain” and “the Most Holy Place”. Perhaps you can illustrate this division of the tabernacle by trying to talk with your children through a wall in your house. Then come back together and talk to your children about why God limited access to Himself. Talk with them about how our sin separates us from a holy God.

2. In Hebrews 9:11-14 we read about Jesus the Great High Priest. Ask your children what they find in these verses about the greatness of Jesus as High Priest.

- a. Talk about verse 11 and how the “greater tent” where Jesus ministers is in heaven.
- b. Make sure to discuss verse 12 and how Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross was a once and for all sacrifice while the old covenant priests offered continual sacrifices. Also talk about the phrase “eternal redemption” with your children and how Jesus’ sacrifice provided for eternal life and eternal forgiveness of sins.
- c. Verses 13-14 compare and contrast the blood of the animals of the continual sacrifices by the old covenant priests with the blood shed by Jesus.
- d. Also talk with your children how after Jesus’ sacrifice the curtain of the Most Holy Place was torn in two (Matthew 27:51) and now those that believe in Jesus have full access to God the Father (Hebrews 4:14-16).

3. Talk with your children about what God taught you from this passage and the sermon. Talk with them about each part of the sermon (access to the Father, confronting our sin, and God’s grace).

Incense was representative of the prayers of the people. The prayers of the people go up before God’s presence. The ark of the covenant was the footstool of God’s throne. God was present with His people as their king. And as their king, he made a covenant with them which is outlined in the tablets of stone contained in the ark.

In all these things, God’s presence was veiled. Access to Him was not full because of His holiness. The priests were only able to minister in the first room which was the Holy Place and there only once a year. The high priest could enter the Most Holy Place, to make a temporary atonement for the sins of the people, which he did year after year.

Big Idea

Because our access to the Father is eternally secure through the blood of His Son, don’t look for ways to justify or ignore today’s sins and failures but instead follow the Spirit who always leads us back to God’s moderating and motivating grace.

Outline

1. Access to the Father

2. Confronting our Sin

3. God’s Grace

When we behold the glory of Christ in the gospel, it reorders the loves of our hearts, so we delight in him supremely, and the other things that have ruled our lives lose their enslaving power over us.
- Sinclair Ferguson

Scriptures for further study:

1 John 1:8-9

Romans 8:1,33-34

"Gospel Confrontation"

Hebrews 9:1-14 ESV

Scriptures for further study:

2 Corinthians 5:11-21

Proverbs 27:6

1 Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly place of holiness. **2** For a tent was prepared, the first section, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence. It is called the Holy Place. **3** Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place, **4** having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. **5** Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail. **6** These preparations having thus been made, the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties, **7** but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people.

8 By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing **9** (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, **10** but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation. **11** But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) **12** he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. **13** For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, **14** how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

Historical Context

The writer begins by outlining what he means by the place of holiness. The place of holiness is the place where God dwells. When God met Moses in the burning bush, he told him to remove his sandals for the place he was standing was holy ground. Wherever God is, that is a place of holiness because God is special. God brings His holiness to where He is. And in the Old Testament with regards to the tabernacle and the temple, God had designed a place where he would dwell in His holiness. The lampstand represented God's illumination; His revealing of Himself to His people. The table and the bread of presence represented fellowship with God. He is present with his people. There were twelve loaves of bread representing the twelve tribes of Israel, the fullness of God's people. He desires table fellowship and intimacy with his people.

FOR STUDENTS

If you want to connect with our student ministries, contact Pastor Jimmy (jimmyl@fpcrome.org)

1. What did the high priest take with him into the Most Holy Place and why (Heb 9:7)? Why were the holy places closed to non-priests (9:8)?
2. Jesus Christ changed everything. What's different now (9:11-13)? How was the new covenant established (9:12b)? What did it secure (9:12c)? What's dead (9:13c)? Who's alive (9:13c)?
3. What features of the Old Testament tabernacle stood out to you and why?
4. Does this passage change the way you think about the unprecedented access Christians have to God? What does more "confidence" look like (or not look like) as we come into God's presence?
5. In what ways have you sought to alleviate a guilty conscience? How are you encouraged today to find that solution only at the cross?

Selected questions borrowed and adapted from Hebrews for You by Michael J. Kruger and How Jesus Speaks into Everything by John D. Barry

Life in the old covenant was life in the holy place. The priests were called to serve God. They had an indirect, mediated relationship with God, but they did not know him directly. They could not know him this way, because their sin, though temporarily covered, was not yet removed.

- Richard Phillips

FOR NON-BELIEVERS OR NEW BELIEVERS

If you want to know more about Jesus and Christianity, contact Pastor Jonathan (jonathans@fpcrome.org)

1. As humans, we are by definition worshipping creatures. It's what we do. All the time. Everybody worships, it's just a matter of what or who. Worship is what you ascribe worth to. It's what you value the most. It's the thing that is on the throne in your heart. Take a moment to honestly evaluate your current life. Based on your thoughts, actions, calendar, spending priorities, (etc.), what does all of this say about what/who you are worshipping? The Bible says we are to worship God and him alone. Is this the case with you?

2. This passage references the Old Testament tabernacle. This was the place where God met with his people and forgave their sins. But now, God meets with his people and forgives us through the person and work of Jesus Christ. To take this a step further, John 1:14 tells us that Jesus came to dwell, or "tabernacle," among us. Have you ever thought about the fact that God actually came to dwell with us and show us his presence? Even more astounding, the promise of Scripture is that he will dwell with us forever (Revelation 21:3), and that he has prepared a place for us to dwell with him (John 14:1-3). Not only is he our Savior, but he also gave us the assurance of living in close relationship with him forever.

3. This passage speaks of the need for our sins to be forgiven. Sometimes these are sins of ignorance (verse 7). But often they are willful. Sins also include what we do and don't do. What we say and don't say. More importantly, it's not just that we sin but that we are sinners. We sin because we have a sin nature. We are sinners right down to the root. This requires more than just surface cleansing. We need a transformation from the inside out. We need a new heart. We need a total, deep cleaning. This is what our Savior Jesus Christ provides (verse 14). Repent of your sin/sins, and trust in Christ's blood alone to cleanse you.

4. In this passage, we are told what we are saved from: sin and death. But notice in verse 14, we are also told what we are saved for: serving God. God saved us so that we may serve the living God! His goal is not just to save us from the penalty of our sin, but also to give us a new purpose, to live our lives as God intended. The essence of sin is to want to serve ourselves, but when we are saved, we are now given a new desire and purpose to live for God and his glory. It's not about you. It's all about him. This is true life. Is this the life you have? Is this the life you desire?

Like Christina. But even more so...we need something to fix our gaze upon...we need a home to pull us forward...and according to Hebrews, that is Jesus Christ...like the home on the hill in the painting, Jesus is the pinnacle of God's plan of redemption...so considering this painting and background, here these words afresh from Hebrews chapter 12, verses 1-2:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and the sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

And so, church, let's begin this journey in Hebrews together...which is not disconnected from our humanity and our struggles...for we to live in Christina's world...a world of suffering, pain, and hardship...but we are in a relationship with the savior, Jesus, who has overcome the world...and because of His supremacy, calls us to fix our eyes on Him in order that we might persevere in faith. -Tremper Longman, EBC, 23-25

About the artwork

Andrew Wyeth is perhaps the most famous American artist of the 20th century. He, along with John Singer Sargent, are the only two American artists invited into the Academy of Fine Art in Paris, France. President Kennedy awarded Wyeth the presidential medal of freedom, the only visual artist to receive such an award. He was also awarded presidential medals from George H Bush and George W Bush.

His art is connected to his humanity. He was a man that experienced loss and grief in this broken and fallen world and often expressed his pain in visual form through art.

His most famous work, and the one that best expresses his struggle with pain and grief, is a painting called Christina's World (1948). Christina is a friend of Wyeth and had a disease that left her unable to walk. Instead of choosing a wheelchair, she preferred to crawl using her arms. The painting is a picture of her struggle...but it is also a picture of her hope...in the painting her hands are gripped to the ground portraying her daily suffering, yet her body is leaning towards the farmhouse, which was her home. Life was a struggle, but her gaze and hope were on her home, which kept her moving forward and not giving up.

The book of Hebrews has a very similar theme...the writer expresses the hope and gaze of home in the person and work of Jesus Christ...the struggle to give up or turn back was very real for the audience...most scholars believe the original audience was Jewish Christians who were facing persecution...it would have been a struggle for them to keep moving forward in the profession of Jesus Christ because with that profession came pain and hardship.

ADDITIONAL NOTES



What is Pulpit Driven Discipleship?

Discipleship from the pulpit to communities therein pressed into the head, heart and hands of image bearers of God every day.

Pulpit Driven Discipleship is the name of a process of discipleship. Discipleship begins on Sunday with the sermon faithfully preached by our pastors then the message of sermon is digested and pressed into the heart throughout the week through prayer reflection and discussion in the home or in smaller discussion groups. It is in this context that life transformation and growth occur.

The pastoral leadership team and the Adult Discipleship Ministry Team are excited to walk together through the Book of Hebrews. Please prayerfully consider incorporating PDD as your primary means of discipleship. We believe that PDD is appropriate for individuals, couples, families, and groups of all kinds. This great resource can be found in the bulletin on Sunday, and will be available on-line and via email each week.

Director of Adult Discipleship Rob Davis welcomes discussion, questions, and comments of all kinds. Rob Davis 706-252-5216, RobD@fpcrome.org

PULPIT DRIVEN DISCIPLESHIP



Andrew Wyeth, Christina's World, 1948 ;

Perseverance by Promise ***A Study of the Sermon to the Hebrews***

May 1, 2022
Hebrews 9:1-14 ESV